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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 002813

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DEPT FOR SA/INS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: MAJOR PARTY HEADS SKEPTICAL ABOUT FUTURE MAOIST  
BEHAVIOR, WANT POSTPONEMENT OF POLLS

Classified By: Amb. James F. Moriarty, Reason 1.4 (b/d)

Summary

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11. (C) On December 14, in separate meetings with Nepali Congress (NC) President G.P. Koirala and CPN-UML General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal, the Ambassador cautioned that

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if the Maoists returned to violence, Washington would look askance at the political parties remaining linked to them. The Ambassador urged the Party leaders to convince the Maoists to extend the unilateral cease-fire. Both leaders expressed some skepticism about Maoist intentions. Koirala admitted that a return to violence by the Maoists would put the Parties in a very difficult situation. MK Nepal responded by saying the Parties would condemn a return to violence by the Maoists and would not be able to continue cooperating with them. The Ambassador also assured the two political leaders that the U.S. continued to push the King to reach out and reconcile with the political parties to agree on a way back to democracy; NC President Koirala was particularly anxious to see the King take such an initiative. The Parties planned to continue pro-democracy demonstrations to pressure the King to act. End Summary.

Ambassador: Maoist Return to Violence Unacceptable  
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12. (C) In separate December 14 meetings with NC's GP Koirala and UML's MK Nepal, the Ambassador explained that, while Washington hoped that the Maoist-Parties 12-point understanding would lead toward progress, we remained skeptical of the Maoists. He stressed that if the Maoists broke the cease-fire, it would be difficult for anyone, either within the Administration or on the Hill, to support the political parties continuing to cooperate with the Maoists. He explained that the U.S. feared the Maoists would return to the warpath and use violence, including assassinations, to derail the municipal elections planned for February 8. We could not countenance legitimate Parties working with a totalitarian party using violence to overthrow the regime. We would condemn the Maoists if they break the cease-fire and hoped that the Party leaders would push the

Maoists to extend it. Both leaders claimed that they could not say what the Maoists would do; MK Nepal stated he could not give a guarantee that the Maoists would act peacefully and in accordance with their commitments.

Koirala: Parties would be in a "Fix"

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13. (C) GP Koirala added that a return to violence by the Maoists would put the Parties in a very difficult position. He argued that the King should use the Maoists' extension of the cease-fire to start a dialogue with the political parties. The Parties could then convince the Maoists to extend the cease-fire. While he had no answer as to how his party would react if the King failed to act and the Maoists returned to violence, he clearly understood the Ambassador's message. Koirala admitted that the Parties were operating "on the edge of a sharp knife." If the King did not take any initiative, "it would be difficult for me to convince the Maoists to extend their cease-fire"; if the Maoists broke the cease-fire, it would "be difficult for the political parties to continue to work with them." He feared that the Parties' "initiative for peace will be sidelined." He claimed that "everything lies with the King." The NC leader stressed that the Parties' movement would be peaceful and that he had clearly told the Maoists that NC would not cooperate with them as long as they had guns. He stated that his party was aware of communist history and knew that as long as the Maoists had guns, they could redirect the weapons against the Parties.

MK Nepal: We Would Condemn the Maoists

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14. (C) For his part, MK Nepal began by stressing that the seven-party alliance sought to convince the Maoists to accept multi-party democracy and agree to a peaceful resolution of

the insurgency. MK Nepal insisted that the political parties would not accept a return to violence by the Maoists and would stay on a peaceful course; the UML would condemn the Maoists if they once again took up arms. He added that if the Maoists took wrong steps, the Parties would not accept the Maoists, just as they did not accept the King's roadmap. The UML "would fight to the last any sort of autocratic regime." The Ambassador noted that the political parties' strongest card was as champions of peace. MK Nepal agreed and emphasized that only the peaceful mobilization of the people could bring about change.

NC Prepared to Dialogue with King

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15. (C) The Ambassador emphasized to both Party leaders that the U.S. continued to urge the King to reach out to the political parties and initiate a dialogue on the way back to democracy. NC President Koirala was much more open to responding to the King if he reached out to initiate a dialogue and stressed that he wanted a dialogue with Gyanendra. That said, Koirala acknowledged the growing demand for a republic and said he would have to convince the other members of the seven-party alliance about the wisdom of dialogue if the King took the initiative. MK Nepal was more hesitant, saying his Party would have to be convinced of the King's sincerity.

Continuing Demonstrations to Pressure King to Act

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16. (C) Both GP Koirala and MK Nepal stressed that the King should announce the postponement of municipal elections, scheduled for February 8. MK Nepal noted that, if the King postponed elections and announced a cease-fire, he would bring pressure to bear on the Maoists to extend their cease-fire. MK Nepal also insisted the King needed to realize his steps were wrong and return to the October 2002 position (i.e., prior to the dismissal of Nepal's last elected government). To show his sincerity, the King should

dismiss the current government and either revive parliament or allow the Parties to form an interim government to prepare for constituent assembly elections. The seven-party alliance had organized a pro-democracy demonstration December 15 in Kathmandu. MK Nepal acknowledged the Parties had not prepared well for the demonstration and he estimated the numbers might not approach 15,000 (the number participating in the UML's December 2 Kathmandu rally). The UML planned to finish a series of meetings around the country (December 23 in Baglung, December 25 in Nepalgunj, and December 27 in Mahendranagar); the seven Parties would then start preparations for a "grand mobilization."

#### Acknowledge Still Worried About Maoist Intentions

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17. (C) MK Nepal stated that he too "remained skeptical about the Maoist commitments." While MK Nepal noted that Maoist behavior had improved dramatically, the Maoists had still prevented UML cadre from entering Taplejung, a district in the northeast. He worried about IDPs in Janakpur, Nepalgunj and Kailali, among other places, being able to go back to their homes and villages. The UML leader reported that the UML still received reports of extortion. He said the Parties could not guarantee the safety of those who return, and human rights monitoring was needed. He said he had asked UN OHCHR head Ian Martin to take a leading role in monitoring the cease-fire and the understanding. Sujata Koirala, the NC's foreign policy coordinator and daughter of GP Koirala, who sat in on the NC discussion, stated that the Maoists had recently made extortion demands of her women's development project in Sunsari District. Although the local Maoist commander's wife worked on the project, she had also insisted that the project pay the Maoists. The project coordinator had instead fled to Kathmandu in fear for her life.

#### Comment

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18. (C) The Party leaders do not know what the Maoists plan to do. We share their doubts that the Maoists will extend the cease-fire absent any action by the King. We believe these key party leaders understood our message warning of cooperation with Maoists using violence to overthrow the regime; we hope the politicians will press the Maoists to continue the cease-fire. Given their strong distrust of the Maoists, we estimate that if the King initiated a dialogue, Koirala would be able to convince the other political leaders to respond.

MORIARTY